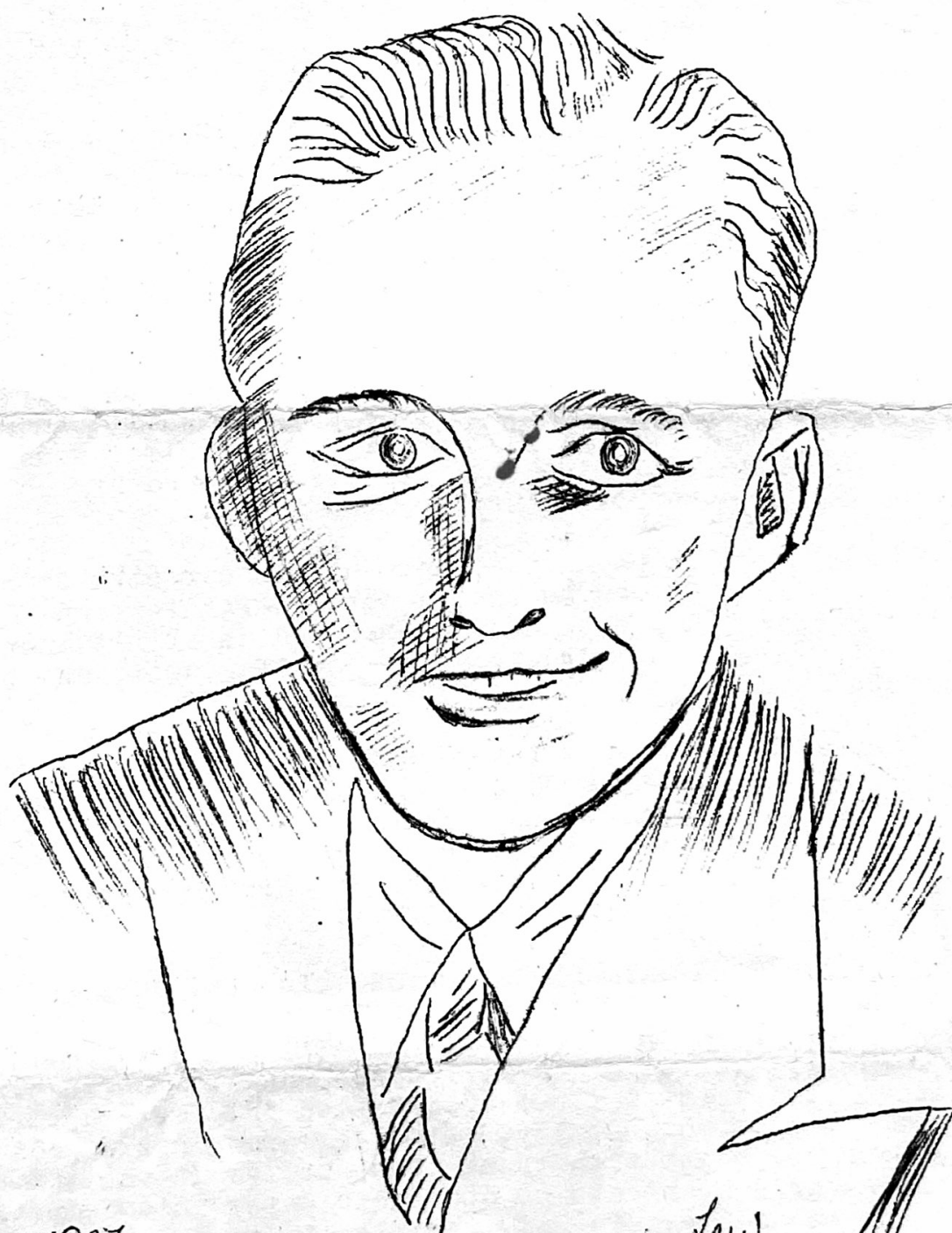


CROSBY

POST

JULY 1954



1937.

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JOURNAL OF THE CROSBY SOCIETY.

DOT HARDIMAN'S INTERVIEW WITH NORMAN WISDOM.

Friday the 13th of April was a memorable and a lucky day for me. I had been invited to meet Britain's King of Comedy, Norman Wisdom at the Birmingham Hippodrome. With some inner intrepidity I presented my letter of introduction to the Stage Door Manager, who told me that Norman was on stage but would be off in a few moments.

As I waited at the top of the Dressing Room steps I could hear a voice raised in protest and the boom of a drum. As I'd seen the show I knew this was the scene where Jerry Desmond (letely back from the USA where he's been working with Bob Hope) gives Norman Wisdom a lesson in the art of playing the big bass drum. Jerry uses a sinister looking machine, a blow from which would have put a less resilient body out of action for days. Judging from the laughter Norman was still very much on his toes.

The sounds of applause finally died away and Norman, dressed in his too tight suit which has become his trade mark, bounded up the steps two at a time to greet me. As we shook hands I got the impression that, although small of stature, he is very strong and fit. He stands 5' 4" high. He had just taken a terrific beating on stage but he was as calm and unruffled as if he'd just arisen from a favourite armchair.

I asked how he kept so fit and active and he replied that energy is derived solely from his enthusiasm - his very blue eyes twinkled as he said this. He asked me if I would like to go to his dressing room and I hastened to explain that it was crowded with people connected with the theatre and various committees. I told him I'd feel nervous amongst so many and would rather have a word with him alone if possible. At my remarks the famous Wisdom smile came over and taking my hand he led me down the steps to the back of the stage. It was rather noisy as people were busy moving scenery in preparation for the next performance. We found a quiet looking corner by a large piano. Norman pulled out the piano stool and dusted it with the sleeve of his famous shabby jacket, and with a little bow, bade me be seated. I found him so very easy to talk to that I soon forgot how nervous I was.

I told him we were so pleased to have him in our club to which he replied he was really to belong to such a worthy organization. He has a very high regard for Bing, both as a person and an entertainer. When time permits he likes to see a Crosby film - his favourite one being "The Bells of St. Mary's".

He was anxious to know what I thought of the show and he really was grateful and pleased to hear that I enjoyed every minute of it. He asked for my candid opinion as to just which was my favourite sketch of the four he did in the show. It was hard to choose but I told him I would settle for the one called "Gates Closed" which has Norman trying to get into a football match without a ticket.

We said a word about Norman's films and his next one, yet untitled, is due before the cameras in early June. We'll see Norman as the janitor of an orphanage and, although it will be primarily a comedy, Norman's great gift for pathos will be given more scope than it was in "Trouble In Store". He has also written a new song called "Please - Opportunity" specially for the film. Incidentally, although Norman has a good singing voice and his four songs met with tremendous success at the end of the theatre show he assured me he has no desire to enter into competition with contemporary vocalists. His only ambition is to make people laugh and continue to make them laugh for a very long time. If he just do that he will a happy and satisfied man.

His trips to America, first as a struggling almost penniless young music hall entertainer looking for a job and later as an established stage and television star playing on Ed Sullivan's show, left Norman thinking that, apart from ultra modern buildings and glorious sunshine, America was much the same as England.

The latter, being his home, he much prefers.

During his last trip to the States Norman met Bing at Paramount studios and he has already told us how very much at ease Bing made him feel. They exchanged gags, dance steps and ideas - and spent a very pleasant hour together. As Norman spoke of Bing's complete lack of affectation and overwhelming desire to give of his best at all times, I couldn't help but think that Norman possessed those very same qualities perhaps they being the contributory factors to his phenomenal rise to success.

At this point someone called him for the next performance which was soon due to start. He gave me another warm handshake and invited me call upon him at the London Palladium should I happen to be in London during his forthcoming summer show.

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OUR sincere thanks to Dot for this fine contribution to this month's "Crosby Post".

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

TELEVISION CENTRE, WOOD LANE, LONDON, W. 12.

Dear Miss Rainey,

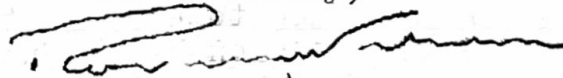
I find it is almost impossible to write anything about Bing Crosby! To try and express one's feelings about an artiste and a man one admires so very much one should write a book ~~and~~ forever hold one's peace!

Bing is not only the greatest show business personality I have ever met; he is, in my opinion the greatest show business personality in the world. I don't suppose I have to tell you that, as a man, he is the most charming, delightful and kind and amusing person one can ever hope to meet. As a performer he is, to me, completely and utterly satisfying. He has ~~no~~ "side", no tantrums, no "temperament" (of the wrong sort), but a complete humility about his own work which always makes him consider himself merely as a member of a team creating a show, a film or whatever it is he is working on.

I can only conclude by saying that working with him was one of the proudest moments and happiest memories of my life.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



(Ronald Waldman)

Head of Light Entertainment, Television.

R O S E M A R Y C L O O N E Y

Dear Dot:

I am very sorry to be so late in replying to your letter requesting my impressions of Bing Crosby.

Actually, I think it very appropriate for you to write to me about Bing because I am one of his most devoted fans. And after working with him on "White Christmas" I am happy to be able to tell you how wonderfully patient he was with me, and to report that his marvellous personality was in evidence throughout the making of the picture. As you can imagine, it was a thrilling experience to work with Bing and Danny Kaye on the same picture.

Sincerely,



RC:BB

During the last month I received a really fine drawing of the old maestro from a member. Unfortunately, it is too large to reproduce on the front page of "Crosby Post" where it rightly belongs. Also, it was expertly drawn in a very hard black pencil which, again, unfortunately, comes off and my efforts to put only part of this excellent likeness of Bing on a stencil were in vain. I'm genuinely sorry for the artist-member who must have gone to a lot of trouble preparing the portrait and I do hope she will try again for we do so urgently require portraits of The Groaner.

Although I have a collection of Crosby records I had never heard or owned a copy of the early Warner-Brunswick record of "Learn to Croon" and "Moonstruck". I came across it quite by accident when I was 'visiting' a certain furnishing warehouse. This must surely prove that junk shops are not the only places where Crosby can be found. This may induce our stalwarts, Ted Laker in particular, to go around knocking on all the many merchants' warehouses in this Crosbied isle. To return to my 'find'. When I first examined this famous Crosbyana effort it seemed heavily marked but it plays magnificently. It strikes me, upon hearing the disc for the very first time, that young Bing Crosby was many years in advance in his style of vocalism for I have a couple of recordings of "Learn To Croon" made near the time of Bing's recording and anyone can note the inferior singing by these other two vocalists.

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CROZ-TALK

B I N G is reported to be teamed once more with DANNY KAYE in another IRVING BERLIN musical. All set to be before the cameras in 1955. Apparently B I N G and Danny got along famously during the making of "WHITE CHRISTMAS", in fact it was just as though they were life-long friends - although they had really only known each other casually before the film was started. They amazed everyone within hearing distance at Paramount by acting like brothers. This must have made for a wonderful lively picture for it is said that they had so much fun making it and we trust that this atmosphere will 'ooze' through to us via the screen.

On June 7th Newsweek had this to report about Crosby son, GARY GARY was cleared of any responsibility for an accident that occurred when his car collided with another occupied by Mexican farm laborers at a highway crossroad north of San Jose, California. One Mexican was killed and young CROSBY was taken to hospital with a bruised knee and a cut nose. Damage suits totalling 140,000 dollars were filed against GARY, or rather BING as Gary is a minor.

GARY was forced to postpone his appearance as a replacement

THE CROSBY WAXWORKS

by Colin Pugh

My review of the Bing Crosby release for June - 05304 - will have to appear next month as the record is not to hand at the time of writing. On one side we shall have "If There's Anybody Here (From Out Of Town)" by Bing and Donald O'Connor with Matty Matlock's All Stars. It bears a matrix number L7507 and was recorded on Dec. 30th 1953. On the flip side is "Back In The Old Routine" which was cut at the same session by the same personnel and has a matrix number of L7508.

I have no particular theme on which to embark this month; instead, several small but interesting items of information on recordings have accumulated and I propose passing these on to you now. The first of these concern current pressings of early English Brunswick releases and I'll start with my "piece de resistance" which gave me quite a thrill. On ordering a new copy of 02452 - "Too Marvellous For Words", I discovered that they are now pressing these from a "B" master instead of the "A" as used originally, so the matrix now shown in the wax is DLA 738 B. It could be that the "B" master has been in use for quite some time in which case you may already know about it, but as no one has mentioned it to me, I rather doubt this. In any case there must be many with an "A" pressing who have not purchased a copy since. Apart from several minor differences in recording between the "B" and the "A", and the fact that the "B" is pitched slightly higher but only very slightly, the most readily detectable difference for a quick check is found at the end of the record on Bing's last voicing of the word "marvellous".

Now you have all got back from your Record dealers' we will continue. (Don't blame me if their wholesalers have old stock on their shelves). Many of our earlier Brunswick releases did not have the matrix numbers pressed in the wax and sometimes not even on the label, but it is generally regarded as a more satisfactory copy when the matrix number is shown. Brunswick 01166 falls into this category and the current pressings give the matrix numbers of both sides, both on the label and in the wax. The two titles are "Out Of Nowhere" and "If You Should Ever Need Me". It's more than likely that there are several examples of pressings which now show the matrix numbers which were not shown on earlier copies, and I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has found other instances.

Whereas when the necessity arises the company will bring another master into use as in the case above of "Too Marvellous For Words", when an alternate master is not available another solution has to be adopted. To avoid deleting a recording, a dubbing is taken from a new pressing and a new master is then produced from that. I have previously quoted examples of current pressings which have been produced thus and pointed out that they are identified by the letters XYZ preceding the matrix numbers. The latest example of this that I have come across are the new pressings of "South Sea Island Magic" on ~~xxxx~~ 02263. Here again, I would be pleased to hear from anyone again citing other examples.

While the theme from "The Glenn Miller Story", written by Mancini, is still fresh in our minds, pop Bing's version of "But Beautiful" on your turntable and listen to the melody! Written by Van Heusen and Burke in 1947, the main "theme" of this tune is repeated practically note for note in "The Glenn Miller Theme". It wouldn't surprise me if some bright spark didn't rehash "Moonlight Serenade" to use as the "Theme" music in a film called "The Bing Crosby Story".

(Continued on next page.)

To make a recording in days gone by, a vocalist trotted along to the studio at the appointed time where he got together with the Orchestra which had likewise trotted along to the recording Studio at the appointed time, and then proceeded to make the cut or cuts as deemed necessary. Today, apparently, that's all out -- it's old fashioned. The vocalist stays put and the Orchestra stays put, and the recording engineers trundle their gear about the country from one to the other, 'collecting' material required, which, having thus obtained they proudly haul off their own domain from where it eventually emerges as the finished product with which we are all familiar - a gramophone record. This procedure is obviously dependant on the sales potential of the Artists' recordings, but it is extremely interesting to note the circumstances under which that present popular recording coupling "Young At Heart"/"I Get So Lonely" - was born. The orchestration was recorded by Guy Lombardo on tape in New York. The tape was taken to Decca's at Los Angeles but they couldn't entice Bing into the studio, so they took the tape to Lakeside Golf Course and persuaded him to add his vocal to Lombardo's music in the Golf house rooms. This is probably an indication of what I mentioned last month regarding Bing's cutting down on records.

My latest news of a Bing issue in the U.S.A. is of a Long Play record - number DL5508. So far I haven't the details of the individual songs but understand there are eight under the title of "Some Fine Old Chestnuts", and that Bing has not previously recorded these neither have they been issued before on 78 rpm discs. We can only hope that English Decca will decide to make these two sides available over here.

..... c r o z t a l k contd.

for his father on the latter's summer radio show.

Will members who live in London and are intersted in a little get together when "WHITE CHRISTMAS" comes to the PLAZA get in touch with me as soon as possible at 41 Basing Hill, Wembley, Middlesex.

In our last issue we erroneously called ARTHUR GROVES, composer of the "Windmill Song" ARTHUR YOUNG. We apologise hoping you will put it down to 'just something going wrong'. By the way, Arthur's song is doing well. Lester Ferguson sang it over Easter and now Billy Cotton and Max Bygraves are intersted in it. Some seaside towns are featuring it in their summer shows and giving away free windmills!!

THINGS THEY SAY:))))))))

BETTY HUTTON - "Bing's lazy ways frighten me, I knock myself out and raise the roof while he just stands there like a corpse. Yet, he's the biggest scene stealer I know (during making of "Here Comes The Waves".)

INGRID BERGMAN - "That man has warmth and tenderness, he can do more with a lift of his finger than most actors can do with a broad gesture." (during "Bells of St. Mary's")

B I N G C R O S B Y - "They ought to give an Oscar every year for the best performance by a kid. I'm thinking right now of little Christian Fourcade. He was the boy who played my son in "Little Boy Lost". He's a junior grade Orson Welles, Tony Martin and Irving Berlin combined. He acts so believably, you'd think he'd been an actor all his life - and he has almost, having started at the age of four."

DOT HARDIMAN, 1/17 New Street, Smethwick, Staffs. has for sale at 3/9 each PLUS POSTAGE the following NEW records:-

If I Had My Way/Trap Your Troubles. Some Enchanted Evening/Bali Hai. I Surrender Dear/Aloha.

Sam's Song/So Tall A Tree.

Alexander's Band/Spangier

Sweet Leilani/One Rose.

Gone Fishin'/Moonlight Bay.

Apple For Teacher/Bluebirds Sing.

"BING" sung by Dinkie New.

White Christmas/Start New Year Right

Song of Islands/Aloha OE.

Dream Girl PIKA/Sweetheart Sigma Chi

(this one American DLA 2440)

an "X" here signifies your membership is due to expire